



Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance Exemption Form and Checklist

Name: _____ APN: _____

Site Address: _____

Phone _____ Email _____

This Water Efficient Landscape Checklist may be submitted in lieu of a landscape plan for 1-2 unit residential development or any landscape where at least 30 percent of the estimated total water use is provided by graywater, captured rainwater or recycled water. WELO requirements do not apply to accessory dwelling units, additions or remodels, but do apply to reconstruction and accessory structures.

Landscapes within the Soquel Creek Water District or the City of Santa Cruz Water Department Service Area are regulated by those agencies with respect to water efficiency. Please contact the applicable jurisdiction for their requirements.

Part A – Exemptions. The following landscapes are exempt from the County’s WELO ordinance. If your landscape is one of these, please check the box and sign below:

- Landscape irrigated for an establishment period of 2-5 years, after which time the irrigation system is removed.
- Area dedicated to edible plants within a family or community garden.
- Agricultural crop, feedlot, paddock or pasture.
- Area installed for stormwater treatment.
- Residential landscape of 500 square feet or less.
- Landscape irrigated entirely by graywater, captured rainwater or recycled water.
- Registered historical site with a period landscape style.
- Ecological restoration project.
- Plants cultivated for scientific research or public exhibit in botanical institutions.

If an exemption box is checked above, the owner or agent signature below acknowledges that the landscape will be maintained in compliance with the checked box, subject to inspection by the County, unless a new checklist is filed by the owner and accepted by the County.

Part B – Landscape Checklist.

<p>This checklist establishes landscape requirements for: 1-2 unit residential development; residential reconstruction, additions and accessory structures; and for any landscape where at least 30 percent of the estimated total water use is provided by graywater, captured rainwater or recycled water.</p>	
Component	Performance Standards
Plants	Planting areas divided into hydrozones based on plant factors (high, medium, low or very low) and irrigated on separate valves. Plant factors are provided by Water Use Classifications of Landscape Species (WUCOLS – see https://cimis.water.ca.gov/Content/PDF/wucols00.pdf).
	At least 75% of the landscape area is low to very low water use (average plant factor of 0.3 or lower). Up to 25% of landscape area may be medium use (average plant factor 0.6), on separate valve(s).
	Landscape maintained free of invasive plants, per WUCOLS or similar.
Turf Limits	Combined area of turf and water features does not exceed 25% of landscape area; average WUCOLS plant factor of this area does not exceed 0.6, as per above.

Turf Limits	No turf or high water use plants on any slope greater than 25% or any area less than 10' wide.	
Irrigation* <i>*A fixed, permanent irrigation system is not required; hand-watering accepted unless project-specific circumstances require automated application.</i>	Controllers self-adjusting, use rain sensor and either weather station or soil moisture data. (For landscapes with no turf, the Director may waive the requirement to install a self-adjusting controller).	
	Irrigation system and irrigation schedule do not exceed plant factors.	
	Irrigation schedule programmed into controller; written copy in possession of owner. Revised irrigation schedule provided to owner for long-term use after plants established.	
	Overhead spray irrigation events scheduled between 5:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m. unless contraindicated.	
	Sprinkler heads and emission devices have matched application rates, correct distribution	
	Overhead sprinklers at least 24 inches from any hardscape (unless microemitter). Irrigation system avoids overspray, will not allow water to flow onto hardscapes or adjacent property.	
	If water pressure at meter is greater than 80 psi, a pressure regulator is installed.	
	Check valves installed as necessary to prevent low-head drainage.	
	Compliant backflow prevention device and accessible manual shutoff installed at point of connection.	
	If the landscape exceeds 5,000 square feet, the irrigation system shall include a flow sensor with automatic shutoff to prevent excess flow created by system damage or malfunction.	
Water features recirculating; pools and spas covered when not in use.		
Soil Preparation	Organic amendment incorporated at a rate of 6 cu.yds. per 1,000 sq.ft., in top 6 inches of soil, except where: 1) existing soil has greater than 6% organic matter in top 6 inches; 2) amendment is contraindicated by specifications for summer-dry species; or 3) native plants adapted to site soils are used.	
	Exposed soils mulched with minimum three-inch layer of organic material – except in turf areas, creeping or rooting groundcovers, or direct seeding applications where mulch is contraindicated.	
I understand that my installed landscape requires inspection by an independent, third-party inspector, and that my building permit will not receive final inspection and clearance until landscape installation is verified to comply with this checklist. If an exemption box is checked above, the landscape will be maintained as indicated until a new checklist is filed by the owner or subsequent owner and accepted by the County.		
_____	_____	_____
Applicant signature	Print name	Date

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Water Efficient Landscaping [page](#) provides information and resources about low water use plants, landscape design and irrigation. The page also includes links to forms that you might need, and to calculators that enable you to estimate your allowed water use and proposed or existing water use.



You can also find links to WELO pages, forms, certificates, [calculators](#) and the WELO ordinance at the "[Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance](#)" page. You can navigate to this page from the Community Development and Infrastructure home page - hover over **Unified Permit Center, Building Permits and Safety** - then click on Water Efficient Landscaping Info.

You may also email Planning.ZoningInfo@santacruzcounty.us or call 831-454-2130.